

The Boy Who Escaped

Norman was a science project.

Norman's parents kept him in a box.

Norman didn't like being a science project.

He felt sad.

Norman's parents didn't like it when Norman felt sad. They told him to try very hard to feel happy.

Norman tried.

It didn't work. He still felt sad.

Norman's parents were scientists. They measured Norman's emotions on a "blissometer", an electronic device which converted emotions into numbers and displayed them on a scale of minus eleven to plus eleven with zero in the middle indicating a "flat affect" or, in other words, no feeling at all.

Norman's parents wanted his emotions to go up to plus eleven so that he would always be perfectly happy. They punished him when this didn't happen.

Norman was sad. Sad was bad. Norman was bad. Norman was punished.

Norman wasn't getting any happier.

Norman's parents were displeased. The experiment wasn't working.

When he was left alone in his box Norman tried to make himself happy. He curled up in a ball and cried and, when he slept, he dreamed that the King of Happiness was coming from the sun and the moon to make him happy.

Usually he woke up too soon and the King of Happiness had not yet arrived.

Norman's parents decided to let him out of the box sometimes for exercise. They let him wander the house. They monitored his feelings. He was slightly happier.

He found the library. He began to read. His happiness rose to above zero. His parents noticed this and decided to allow him to have books.

Norman read lots of books. They made him happy. Norman was still kept mostly in his box.

This made him sad. Norman's parents were scientists but they were also very stupid.

Norman hated science. He decided to become a wizard.

Norman read books about magic. The King of Happiness came to him in his dreams and gave him special books about real magic.

Norman got happier. He started to pile the books up until they made a staircase leading up to the top of his box.

Spinning round and round Norman said a magic spell. The words came from somewhere deep within him and, as he said the words, he changed into the form of a marmalade cat. The cat began to climb the staircase of books, step by step, carefully, gently, stealthily, steadily, onward, determinedly, steadfastly, up and up, to the top of the box and beyond. Through the mists and through the clouds, into the sky of stars and nebulae, Norman the Marmalade Cat Wizard climbed to the land of the sun and the moon and was FREE!!!